

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: MNUC, IN
SUBJECT: DESAI NUCLEAR STATEMENTS

REF: (A) STATE 191537; (B) NEW DELHI 11103

1. THE PRIME MINISTER HAS BEEN ANSWERING NUMEROUS QUESTIONS ON NUCLEAR MATTERS IN PARLIAMENT. IN THE LOK SABHA ON JULY 26, THE PRIME MINISTER WAS ASKED WHAT STEPS ARE BEING TAKEN TO MAKE TARAPUR SELF-RELIANT. THE WRITTEN REPLY WAS: QUOTE: THERE IS CONSIDERABLE DEGREE OF SELF-RELIANCE ALREADY IN THE ACTIVITIES RELATING TO THE TARAPUR ATOMIC POWER STATION. IMPORT SUBSTITUTION EFFORTS ARE CONTINUALLY BEING MADE; FABRICATION OF NUCLEAR FUEL TO IMPROVED DESIGN AND INDIGENISATION OF A NUMBER OF SPARES ARE ALSO ON HAND. TECHNO-ECONOMIC STUDIES ON SUBSTITUTE FUEL ARE ALSO IN PROGRESS. THE OFFICERS AND STAFF OF THE ORGANIZATION ARE ALL INDIAN. END QUOTE.

2. IN THE RAJYA SABHA JULY 27, HE WAS ASKED (A) IF INDIGENOUS URANIUM PRODUCTION IS SUFFICIENT TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF RAPP AND (B) IF THE INDIGENOUS TECHNOLOGY WITH CERTAIN MODIFICATIONS IS PROPOSED TO BE APPLIED TO TARAPUR. THE WRITTEN
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REPLY WAS: QUOTE: (A) YES, SIR. THE INDIGENOUS URANIUM PRODUCTION IS SUFFICIENT TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE RAJASTHAN ATOMIC POWER STATION DURING ITS LIFE TIME. (B) YES, SIR. IMPORT SUBSTITUTION EFFORTS ARE BEING MADE AND TECHNO-ECONOMIC STUDIES FOR SUBSTITUTE FUEL ARE BEING CONDUCTED. END QUOTE.

3. HE WAS ALSO ASKED (A) ABOUT THE IAEA AGREEMENT ON HEAVY WATER FOR RAPP, (B) WHETHER THE NUCLEAR SUPPLIERS CLUB WAS TRYING TO APPLY NEW CONDITIONS FOR SUPPLYING HEAVY WATER AND (C) HOW MANY SUPPLIERS COULD INDIA APPROACH FOR HEAVY WATER. THE REPLY WAS: QUOTE: (A) THE IMPORTANT CONDITIONS OF THE SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENT ENTERED INTO BETWEEN INDIA AND THE IAEA ON 17 NOVEMBER 1977, IN CONNECTION WITH THE PURCHASE OF HEAVY WATER FROM THE SOVIET UNION ARE AS FOLLOWS: (1) AN UNDERTAKING BY INDIA THAT THE MATERIAL PRODUCED AT THE RAJASTHAN ATOMIC POWER STATION WILL NOT BE USED FOR THE MANUFACTURE OF ANY NUCLEAR WEAPON OR ANY NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE DEVICE, (2) MULTI-GENERATION SAFEGUARDS WOULD BE APPLIED ON THE MATERIAL PRODUCED AT THE RAJASTHAN ATOMIC POWER STATION, (3) THE AGREEMENT WILL REMAIN EFFECTIVE TILL SAFEGUARDS HAVE BEEN TERMINATED. (B) THE SO-CALLED LONDON CLUB OF 15 SUPPLIER STATES HAVE FORMALLY COMMUNICATED TO THE IAEA THE COMMON GUIDELINES THEY WILL BE ADOPTING FOR NUCLEAR EXPORTS TO NON-NUCLEAR WEAPON STATES. THESE GUIDELINES WOULD REQUIRE CERTAIN UNDERTAKINGS FROM NON-NUCLEAR WEAPON STATES IN THE CASE OF EXPORT OF AN IDENTIFIED LIST OF ITEMS, WHICH INCLUDES SUPPLY OF HEAVY WATER. (C) HEAVY WATER PRODUCTION IS PRESENTLY RESTRICTED TO A FEW COUNTRIES, ALL OF WHOM ARE MEMBERS OF THE SO-CALLED LONDON CLUB. END QUOTE.

4. THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO ANSWERED A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS
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INCREASING THE AVAILABILITY OF ATOMIC MINERALS IN THE COUNTRY, AND THE STATUS OF HEAVY WATER PLANTS IN THE COUNTRY. HIS ANSWERS WERE SIMILAR TO THOSE SUMMARIZED IN REF B. ASKED IF THERE WAS AN INDO-USSR AGREEMENT ON SUPPLYING HEAVY WATER TO TARAPUR, HE ANSWERED NO. ONE QUESTION ASKED (A) IF THE GOI PLANS TO PRODUCE ENRICHED URANIUM IN INDIA, AND, (B) IF NOT, HOW IT PROPOSES "TO ACHIEVE SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN URANIUM SO AS NOT TO DEPEND ON USA IN THIS REGARD." THE ANSWER WAS (A) "NO, SIR," AND (B) "TECHNO-ECONOMIC STUDIES ON SUBSTITUTE FOR ENRICHED URANIUM ARE IN PROGRESS." THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO SAID THAT GOI WAS PROPOSING TO SET UP A REPROCESSING PLANT AT KALPAKKAN NEAR MADRAS AND DETAILS WERE BEING WORKED OUT.

5. COMMENT: THESE ANSWERS WERE CONSIDERED GENERALLY IN KEEPING WITH THE GOI'S EFFORT TO BE AS RESPONSIVE AS POSSIBLE TO MP'S CONCERNED ABOUT INDIA'S SELF-RELIANCE. WHILE THE "PHRASE "IMPORT SUBSTITUTION" IS APPARENTLY A NEW ONE, ITS USE FOLLOWS THE GENERAL EMPHASIS ON "INDIGENIZATION" OF THE NUCLEAR ENERGY PROGRAM WHEREVER POSSIBLE. WE EXPECT MORE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ALONG THESE LINES EVERY WEEK, AND WILL CABLE THOSE THAT SEEM TO BREAK NEW GROUND AND TOUCH SOME OF THE OTHER RELEVANT ONES. FYI: THE PRIME MINISTER READ A STATEMENT IN THE RAJYA

SABHA JULY 31 RECONFIRMING HIS OPPOSITION TO NUCLEAR EXPLO-
SIONS FOR ANY PURPOSE. WE WILL SEND TEXT WHEN AVAILABLE.
END FYI.
GOHEEN

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